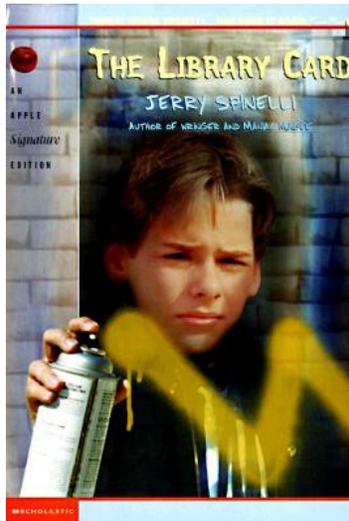


The Library Card



By

Jerry Spinelli

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

The Library Card

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About the author: Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 30 years. He is presently a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites www.reedpublications.org and www.novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on three or four chapters of **The Library Card** and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include peer pressure, books/knowledge can change lives, the importance friends and friendship, identity and creativity, perseverance when facing difficult circumstances.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *foreshadowing*.
7. Identify *personification*
8. Identify *anagrams*
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Complete an Observation Chart
8. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Create an Information Card
4. Design a cover for the novel
5. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

Brenda, Sonseray, and April have nothing in common . . . until a mysterious blue card appears as if by magic and begins to change each of their lives. None of them guesses it at first, but that strange blue card will be their ticket to the past – and to a future they never imagined.

In stories that range from humorous to heartbreaking, Newbery Medal winner, Jerry Spinelli reveals the amazing possibilities lurking behind library doors. (The publisher)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found online at such sites as the following: <http://thenovelworld.com/2010/02/12/the-library-card-review/>

Author Biography

Jerry Spinelli

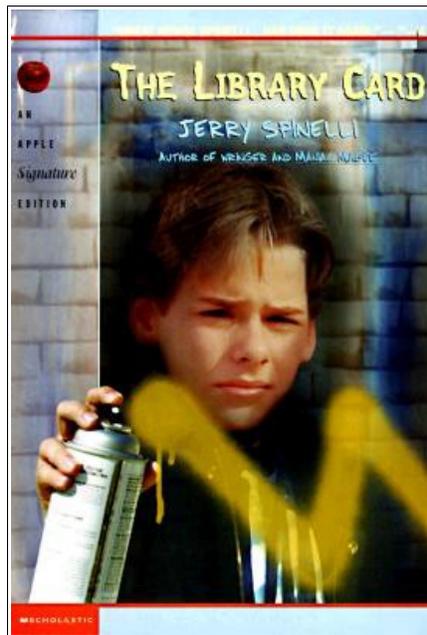
Jerry Spinelli published his first book, *Space Station Seventh Grade*, in 1982, when he was forty-one years old. Since then he has written more than 20 novels, including *Maniac McGee* and *Wringer* (Newbery Medal, 1991). Before he became a full-time writer Jerry worked as a menswear editor for a department store magazine and served in the United States Naval Reserve. He wrote during his lunch breaks, after dinner, and on weekends. Publishers rejected his first novels, but Jerry kept writing. Fifteen years later, his first book was accepted and published. Jerry still calls that book, *Space Station Seventh Grade*, his favorite of all his novels.



Jerry lives in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania – just ten miles from the town where he grew up – with his wife and fellow author, Eileen Spinelli. Together they have six children and sixteen grandchildren. You can read more about Jerry on his website www.jerryspinelli.com

(Summary adapted from the publisher)

The Library Card



By Jerry Spinelli

Name: _____

The Library Card

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Part One Chapters 1-3



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of Part I of *The Library Card* is Mongoose, a rather troubled twelve-year-old boy who as the story opens, is busy shoplifting at the local Mini-Mart with his pal, Weasel. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

section	detention	careened	convertible	simmer
mangled	substitute	erupted	imaginary	definitely

1. The crowd watched in horror as the race car _____ into the grandstand.
2. I think it is cute that little Nicholas has an _____ friend.

3. John Simmons is _____ in the running to become our next mayor.
4. Trisha picked the _____ piece of paper up from the floor and then smoothed it out on her desk.
5. The 1966 hardtop _____ Mustang is a rare find indeed.
6. Grandma Gertie let the pot _____ on the stove for about twenty minutes.
7. The prisoner was kept in secure _____ for the night while the police checked out his story.
8. We had a _____ teacher for the entire week.
9. Which _____ of the stadium are your seats in?
10. Mount Vesuvius _____ in 79 AD, burying the city of Pompeii.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. Why do you think Mongoose decided to steal the candy from the Mini-Mart?

3. Describe what Weasel did when he was suspended from school for two days. Do you think this was a fair punishment? Why or why not?

4. What unusual item did Mongoose find in his pocket? What happened to it in Chapter Two?

5. Weasel dreamed of getting a convertible _____ car after leaving school, while Mongoose dreamed of getting a _____.

Good to Know
Weasel and Mongoose have expensive taste in automobiles. Purchased brand new, Mongoose's choice is priced at between \$53,000 and \$100,000. Weasel's choice was manufactured between 1967 and 2002. A convertible in mint condition goes for about \$10,000.

6. If you were going to nickname yourself after the name of an animal, which animal would you choose? Why?

7. How does Chapter Three end on a rather mysterious note?



Language Activity

A. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter Two “. . . cupcakes, coffee cakes...”

Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

A gasp of surprise	
The sound of two bicycles colliding.	

B. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is “And lo and behold here was Weasel . . . straight as a drill sergeant...”

What two things are being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a frog jumping onto a lily pad

--

b) a little girl tossing a horse shoe

--

C. What is Your First Impression?

Mongoose and Weasel certainly aren't your typical, everyday heroes. The novel opens with the boys shoplifting in a local store, and the section ends with them planning an act of vandalism with spray paint cans. What is your impression of the two boys thus far in the story? Predict what you think will happen to them as the novel continues.

Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first 3 chapters of *The Library Card*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6